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20 June 2005

Honorable Board Members  
MACON COUNTY BOARD OF EDUCATION  
through Mr. Willie C. Thomas, Superintendent of Schools  
Post Office Box 830090  
Tuskegee, Alabama 36083

**RE: *SOUTH MACON SCHOOL***

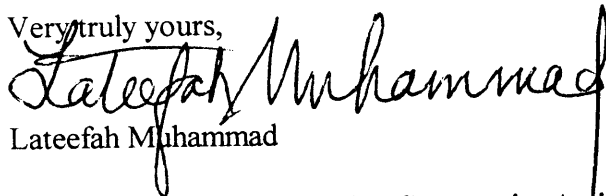
Dear Board Members:

Thank you for agreeing to hold a Special Meeting, upon the recommendation of Board Member Alfred Randolph, to address the concerns of parents, students, former students and supporters of South Macon School. While a quorum of the Board was present at your recent meeting held at Notasulga High School, no date and time were agreed upon due to the reluctance of Vice President Harold White, who chaired your meeting, because, according to White, President Campbell was not present. Because of the serious nature of our grievances, we expect that this Special Meeting will be given your immediate attention for which a date will soon be set.

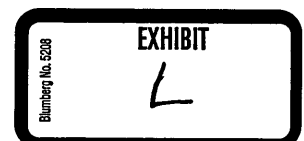
Enclosed is a list of issues and concerns that parents, students, former students and supporters of South Macon School have regarding our School and your recent decision to close it. We are hopeful that these concerns will be addressed during our meeting with the Board and Superintendent.

Thank you for your consideration and cooperation. I look forward to a speedy reply.

Very truly yours,

  
Lateefah Muhammad

cc: Keep South Macon Alive Community Action Group  
News Media



ISSUES AND CONCERNS OF PARENTS, STUDENTS, FORMER STUDENTS AND  
SUPPORTERS OF SOUTH MACON SCHOOL REGARDING THE MACON COUNTY  
BOARD OF EDUCATION'S MAY 19, 2005 DECISION TO CLOSE THE SCHOOL

1. In December 2004, Mrs. Priscilla Moss, South Macon PTA president, sent a letter to parents regarding a school trip for students attending South Macon School. In the letter, she told parents that there is a possibility of the school being closed soon. When Superintendent of Schools Willie Thomas received a copy of the letter, he required her to rescind it, stating that she had given out incorrect information. Why did the Superintendent do and say this when just months later, he recommended that South Macon be closed?
2. Most of the parents, students, former students and supporters of South Macon feel that the recommendation to close South Macon was a "rush to judgment" and/or a hurried decision at the last minute that left parents, students, teachers and administrators in a state of confusion. It certainly appears that very little planning went into the decision-making, and it left out one of the most important components: the consideration of parents, students, teachers and administrators. Why did the Board Members who voted to accept the Superintendent's recommendation to close South Macon School do so without meaningful input from parents, students, teachers and administrators? Should not the Board have required the Superintendent to make his recommendation earlier in the school year?
3. Why weren't South Macon parents, students, teachers, administrators and community supporters included in the decision-making process to close our School?
4. Why weren't South Macon parents and students allowed more time to have their concerns addressed before the Board took action to close our School?
5. The Board promised Principal Theodore Samuel that South Macon School would be made a state-of-the-art elementary school in exchange for the support of the community for the consolidation of the high schools in the county. Why hasn't the Board kept its word, and why hasn't it done more to upgrade and repair South Macon over the years?
6. How much money has the Board invested in the facilities, equipment and materials at South Macon over the past three years? In comparison to the other schools in the county, where does South Macon rank in terms of funding for facilities, equipment and materials?
7. In 2002, Macon County voters, including South Macon residents, went to the polls and supported an increase in the 10-mil tax for educational purposes. How much of the 10 mil tax revenue, if any, has been used to fund facilities, equipment and materials at South Macon?
8. Two years ago, supporters of South Macon School requested of the Superintendent the opportunity to have an independent company give an assessment, at no cost to the Board, of the sewage facilities at South Macon. The Superintendent denied the request. Will the Board Members support permitting such an independent assessment and/or evaluation of, in terms of the needs and costs to repair, the facilities at South Macon School?

## ISSUES AND CONCERNS OF SOUTH MACON SCHOOL

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9. There are problems with students living in one school zone and attending schools in another school zone. Will the Board Members support the Superintendent and staff in enforcing the zoning rules for the school district, especially in the South Macon area? Has the Board reviewed the U.S. Census Bureau report to determine how many school age children are in the South Macon area for zoning purposes?
10. If the decision to close it is **not** rescinded, what plans does the Board have for the use of South Macon facilities and land?
11. Will the Board support a charter school being developed for South Macon School?
12. Will the Board reconsider its decision to close South Macon to allow time for parents and supporters to explore other possibilities for the School?
13. Did the Board request pre-clearance from the U.S. Justice Department and the plaintiffs' attorneys in *Lee v. Macon* before it voted to close South Macon School? Did the Board receive pre-clearance to close South Macon?
14. Since the unused space at South Macon has been considered a contributing factor in closing it, has the Board considered reconstituting South Macon School to be a middle school by bringing back the 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> grades? High school by bringing back 9<sup>th</sup> through 12<sup>th</sup> grades? Did not the Board foresee that unused space would be an issue if the various grades were removed from South Macon?
15. Is it the Board's goal to have all of the county schools in the city of Tuskegee? If so, why?
16. Do the Superintendent and Board Members sense the historical significance and value of a school such as South Macon and what that could mean for the future of this county and beyond?

Respectfully submitted with a cover letter on behalf of the Keep South Alive Community Action Group